

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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SCI-06 OMB-01 SS-20 AID-20 AGR-20 L-03 SPC-03 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2979

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 1530

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FONMIN ON OPIUM SITUATION

1. I LED OFF MY MEETING FEB 28 WITH FONMIN GUNES BY READING THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO HIM WHICH I SAID I HAD RECEIVED ON AN URGENT BASIS FROM WASHINGTON. QTE YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO ADVISE FONMIN THAT YOUR EXCHANGES WITH HIM AND PRIMIN EVECIT HAVE BEEN REVIEWED AT SENIOR LEVELS OF THE USG. YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT FEELS SERIOUS CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY MAY ALLOW THE RESUMPTION OF THE PRODUCTION OF OPIUM. YOU ARE ASKED TO EMPHASIZE THAT YOUR PRESENTATIONS CLEARLY REFLECTED YOUR GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS. YOU ARE FURTHER ASKED TO REQUEST THAT WE STAY IN CLOSEST TOUCH AND THAT FULL WEIGHT BE GIVEN TO THE ADVERSE REACTION IN THE UNITED STATES TO WHAT WOULD BE REGARDED AS A RETROGRADE STEP. FINALLY YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT THE US GOVERNMENT REQUESTS THAT WE HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE ANY DECISION IS TAKEN. UNQTE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE STATEMENT I ADDED AN EXPRESSION OF MY CONCERN REGARDING THE CLEARLY ADVERSE CONGRESSIONAL

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CONSEQUENCES WHICH WOULD FLOW FROM ANY TURKISH RESUMPTION OF

THE BAN.

2. GUNES' RESPONSE IN ENSUING THREE HOUR MEETING (HALF OF THE TIME TAKEN UP WITH TRANSLATIONS) WAS NOT ONLY LENGTHY, BUT OFTEN SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY. MAIN THRUST OF HIS EXTENSIVE COMMENTS THROUGHOUT, HOWEVER, WAS CATALOGUE OF REASONS WHY IT ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR TURKISH GOVT TO RESCIND POPPY BAN. IN FACT, HE DWELLED ON THIS AT SUCH LENGTH THAT LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF WHAT HE SAID WOULD CARRY CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT GOT HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO RESCIND POPPY BAN AND MERELY WANTED TO TALK TO USG REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERED POLICY. HOWEVER, WHEN I DREW THIS INEVITABLE CONCLUSION FROM WHAT HE HAD SAID AND THEN EMPHASITICALLY REEMPHASIZED DEEP AND ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES THIS WOULD HAVE ON US-TURKISH RELATIONS, HE BACKED OFF AND REITERATED THAT NO REPEAT NO DECISION TO GO BACK TO GROWING POPPIES HAD BEEN TAKEN BY GOT.

3. MAJOR POINTS MADE IN CONVERSATION FOLLOW:

A. GUNES REPEATEDLY UNDERSCORED UNWILLINGNESS OF GOT TO ACCEPT ANY IMPLICATION THAT THERE IS ANY US-GOT AGREEMENT WHICH PLACES THEM UNDER OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE BAN. MY ANSWER WAS TO SUGGEST HE PERSONALLY READ THE HANDLEY LETTER AND ESENBEL'S AIDE MEMOIRE REFERRED TO IN EARLIER REPORTING AND THEN MAKE UP HIS OWN MIND. I ALSO REFERRED TO THAT FACT WE HAD PUT \$35 MILLION ON THE LINE IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT WE AT LEAST THOUGHT WAS AN AGREEMENT.

B. POPPY PROBLEM AN URGENT ONE FOR GOT, AND GUNES THEREFORE DISAPPOINTED IN LACK OF URGENCY USG RESPONSE. TO THIS I REPLIED THAT I HAD GATHERED FROM PRIMIN THAT GUNES' IDEA OF BILATERAL TECHNICAL DISCUSSION (WITHOUT PREJUDICE AS TO OUTCOME BY EITHER SIDE) HAD BEEN OVERTAKEN BY GOT PLAN TO REACH ITS OWN DECISION AND ENTER INTO DISCUSSION WITH USG ONLY ON SUBJECT OF HOW DECISION COULD BEST BE IMPLEMENTED.

C. FONMIN ASSERTED (IN EXACT CONTRAST TO WHAT HE SAID IN FEB 13 MEETING) THAT THERE NO POINT IN HAVING TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS UNTIL AGREEMENT REACHED AT POLITICAL LEVEL. HE SAID THIS WHAT WE MUST WORK FOR NOW. HE ADDED THAT IT QTE FORTUITOUS UNQTE THAT PRIMIN HAD MADE STATEMENT TO ME THAT HE HAD BECAUSE THIS

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HAD OBVIOUSLY NOW RESULTED IN GETTING QTE ATTENTION OF HIGH LEVELS OF USG. UNQTE

D. GUNES EXPLAINED THAT THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES WHICH PRIMIN HAD SPOKEN TO ME ABOUT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO SEE WHETHER RPP COULD DISCHARGE ITS CLEAR POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE ELECTORATE TO RENEW POPPY PLANTING AND AT SAME TIME MEET ITS HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATIONS BY ENSURING THAT NO PART OF CROP

WOULD GET INTO ILLEGAL CHANNELS. GUNES SAID THAT THESE COMMITTEES HAD CONCLUDED THAT BOTH COULD BE DONE, AND HE ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT BOTH COULD BE DONE. ON THIS POINT I REITERATED CONVICTION OF OFFICIALS OF MANY NATIONS WHO HAD DEALTH WITH THIS PROBLEM THAT BECAUSE OF TURKEY'S PROXIMITY TO MARKETS, AND FOR OTHER REASONS, IT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT POSSIBLE FOR A PORTION OF POPPIES GROWN IN TURKEY TO BE KEP OUT OF ILLEGAL CHANNELS.

E. HE SAID THAT THE CONTINUATION OF THE BAN IS NOT POSSIBLE EITHER FOR THE PRESENT GOVT OR FOR ANY GOVT WHICH COULD BE FORMED OUTSIDE THE PRESENT CABINET. (MUCH LATER IN CONVERSATION WHEN I REFERRED TO THIS STATEMENT HE AMENDED IT TO SAY THAT THE SITUATION WHICH ARISES FROM THE BAN, RATHER THAN THE BAN ITSELF, CANNOT CONTINUE.)

F. SPEAKING QTE ENTIRELY PERSONALLY UNQTE HE FELT A SOLUTION WORTH CONSIDERING MIGHT BE A RESUMPTION OF POPPY PRODUCTION IN A VERY LIMITED AREA AND UNDER THE MOST STRINGENT CONTROL, PURELY FOR MEETING MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS; THE DROP FROM THIS LIMITED AREA WOULD BE PROCESSED IN A FACTORY TO BE BUILT BY THE US AND TURKEY.

G. AT ONE POINT IN THE CONVERSATION HE MADE A COMMENT QTE WHICH SHOULD BE FORGOTTEN WHEN WE LEAVE THIS ROOM UNQTE TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE WAS NO LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PRESENT BAN IN ANY CASE AND THAT IF A PEASANT WHO DECIDED TO GROW POPPIES AGAIN WAS BROUGHT BEFORE A COURT, ANY JUDGE IN TURKEY WOULD DISMISS THE CASE BECAUSE OF LACK OF A PROPER LEGAL BASIS.

H. THE PROBLEM WAS PRIMARILY POLITICAL IN BOTH COUNTRIES, A POINT HE RETURNED TO TIME AND AGAIN. HE DID NOT BLAME AMERICAN POLITICIANS FOR TAKING CREDIT FOR THE BAN, NOR SHOULD AMERICAN

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POLITICIANS BLAME TURKISH POLITICIANS FOR TAKING CREDIT FOR ITS REMOVAL. WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS QTE A MUTUAL ASSISTANCE UNQTE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD PRODUCE A SOLUTION FOR BOTH THE TURKISH POLITICIANS' AND THE AMERICAN POLITICIANS' PROBLEMS. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO REACH A FIFTY-FIFTY SOLUTION, HE KNEW, BUT THERE COULD NOT BE

A CONTINUATION OF THE 100 PERCENT TO ZERO SOLUTION THAT THEY HAD NOW.

I. MY COMMENT ON THIS LATTER LINE OF THOUGHT WAS THAT WHILE THE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN BOTH COUNTRIES WERE IMPORTANT, WHAT WE MUST FOCUS ON ARE THE REAL PROBLEMS OF EACH COUNTRY WHICH PRODUCED THE POLITICAL CONCERNS. IN TURKEY'S CASE, I STRESSED, IT WAS THE POVERTY IN THE POPPY GROWING AREAS WHICH HAD EXISTED WHEN THE POPPIES WERE GROWN BEFORE, EXISTED NOW, AND WOULD EXIST IN THE FUTURE IF ANYONE THOUGHT THE SOLUTION TO THAT

POVERTY WAS TO ALLOW THE FARMERS TO GROW POPPIES AGAIN. ON
THE OTHER HAND, THE REASON IN THE US FOR POLITICAL CONCERNS WAS THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 1530

TURKEY'S NOT GROWING POPPIES HAD HAD A MARKED AND POSITIVE
EFFECT IN THE U.S. EFFORTS TO KEEP DEADLY HEROIN POISONING OUT
OF THE VEINS OF OUR CITIZENS. NOT GROWING POPPIES MATERIALLY
AFFECTED THE SITUATION IN THE U.S. -- GROWING POPPIES IN
TURKEY DID NOT MATERIALLY AFFECT THE ECONOMICS OF THE
SITUATION HERE EXCEPT FOR PROVIDING A BONANZA FOR CROOKS
ENGAGED IN ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING.

J. AT ONE POINT, AFTER GUNES HAD REFERRED TO TWO
UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE WE LAST MET AND AFTER I HAD
COMMENTED ON TWO MATTERS HE HAD IN MIND (U.S. CONTINUED
INSISTENCE THAT THERE WAS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN TURKEY AND
U.S. AND FAILURE TO RESPOND MORE EXPEDITIOUSLY TO SITUATION
HE HAD PRESENTED TO ME), I SAID THAT UNDOUBTEDLY THERE WOULD
BE NUMBER OF UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENTS AS WE WENT ALONG AND
THAT WE SHOULD NOT LET THEM DETER US FROM PROBLEM AT HAND.
I SAID, HOWEVER, THAT I, TOO, HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY UNFORTUNATE
DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS EXTRAORDINARY OUTBREAK OF TURKISH PRESS

PUBLICITY UNIFORMLY AND VITUPERATIVELY HOSTILE TO THE U.S. ON
THE POPPY BAN ISSUE WHICH HAD FOLLOWED OUR LAST MEETING. I
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ALSO EXPRESSED REGRET THAT NO TURKISH POLITICAL LEADER WAS
ATTEMPTING TO TELL THE PUBLIC AND THEFARMERS THE TRUE FACTS
CONCERNING A LIFTING OF THE POPPY BAN, PARTICULARLY WITH
RESPECT TO HOW RELATIVELY MINOR WOULD BE THE BENEFITS TO
TURKEY (EXCEPT TO THE CROOKS) AND HOW MAJOR WOULD BE THE
ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH AN ACTION TO FOREIGN NATIONS.
GUNES HASTILY REPLIED THAT THE PHRASE QUOTE UNFORTUNATE
DEVELOPMENTS END QUOTE WAS NOT MEANT AS CRITICISM AND
THAT HE TOO VERY MUCH REGRETTED THE OUTPOURING OF PUBLICITY
WHICH HAD FOLLOWED OUR LAST MEETING. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER,
THAT SUCH PUBLICITY WAS INEVITABLE, AND, AS FOR SOMEONE
SPEAKING OUT THE WAY I SUGGESTED, HE SAID THAT THIS WAS
ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY TURKISH LEADER TO DO
AT THIS TIME, GIVEN THE INTENSITY OF FEELINGS HERE ON THIS
SUBJECT.

K. GUNES ASSERTED THAT TIES BETWEEN U.S. AND TURKEY
WERE BASED ON COMMON INTERESTS THAT BOUND US TOGETHER
AND THEY SHOULD BE FAR TOO STRONG TO BE TOO MUCH AFFECTED BY
QUESTION OF WHETHER TURKEY DID OR DID NOT GROW POPPIES. I
REPLIED THAT WHILE THE LEADERSHIPS OF BOTH COUNTRIES UNDOUBTEDLY
BELIEVED THIS, I BELIEVED RELATIONS WOULD IN FACT BE BADLY
DAMAGED IF THE POPPY BAN WAS RESCINDED, BECAUSE OF THE MAJOR
ADVERSE IMPACT THIS WOULD HAVE ON U.S. PUBLIC OPINION.

4. IN SPELLING OUT HIGHLIGHTS OF FOREGOING DISCUSSION I HAVE NOT
LISTED MANY OF MY REBUTTALS, AS THEY CONSISTED LARGELY OF
REITERATION OF POINTS MADE IN EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH BOTH
FONMIN AND PRIME MINISTER AND WITH WHICH DEPARTMENT FULLY FAMILIAR.
LATE IN THE CONVERSATION, I ATTEMPTED TO BRING OUR DIALOGUE INTO
FOCUS BY POINTING OUT THAT CLEAR AND CUMULATIVE PURPORT OF WHAT
FONMIN HAD SAID WAS THAT GOT HAD REALLY MADE UP ITS MIND TO GO
BACK INTO THE POPPY BUSINESS FOR COMPELLING POLITICAL REASONS
AND WAS SIMPLY LOOKING FOR WAYS TOENTER INTO "CONSULTATIONS",
NOW AT POLITICAL RATHER THAN TECHNICAL LEVEL, INORDER TO MAKE
THIS DECISION AS PALATABLE AS POSSIBLE TO USG AND TO RESULT
IN AS LITTLE DAMAGE AS POSSIBLE TO U.S.- TURKISH RELATIONS.

5. I SAID THIS IN EFFECT WAS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE RESULT FROM
WHAT I HAD REQUESTED AT THE OUTSET OF THIS MEETING AND,
IF THIS WAS THE GOT'S INTENTION THEN I MUST FRANKLY
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REITERATE THAT U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS WOULD BE VERY BADLY HURT. I STRESSED THAT THIS DAMAGE WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE BECAUSE EITHER HE OR I OR SENIOR OFFICIALS IN EITHER GOVT WANTED IT, BUT BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL STRONG ADVERSE FEELINGS WHICH WOULD ARISE IN THE U.S. AS A RESULT OF THIS ACTION.

6. WHEN HE EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN BY GOT, I ASKED FOR HIS VIEW AS TO HOW USG-GOT DISCUSSIONS SHOULD PROCEED FROM HERE. HIS RESPONSE TO THIS WAS NOT REPEAT NOT VERY CLEAR. HE SAID THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR ESENBEL TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIGH-LEVEL U.S. OFFICIALS TO EMPHASIZE TO THEM THE NEED FOR A POLITICAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE U.S. ON THIS PROBLEM AND THAT HE (GUNES) WAS CONVINCED THAT QTE AMB ESENBEL AND AMB MACOMBER COULD FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM UNQTE.

7. COMMENT: MY ANALYSIS OF GUNES' COMMENTS IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. WHAT GOT WOULD REALLY LIKE IS FOR USG TO AGREE TO GOT PERMITTING GROWING OF POPPIES ON A LIMITED SCALE UNDER CLOSE CONTROL, WITH USG FINANCIAL HELP FOR (1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REST OF THE POPPY GROWING AREAS, AND (2) CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SINGLE PROCESSING PLANT WHICH WOULD GIVE US CONFIDENCE THAT ILLEGAL LEAKAGE WOULD BE MINIMAL.

B. GUNES HAS ALSO NOT RULED OUTAT ANY POINT IN OUR CONVERSATIONS SOLUTION WHICH WOULD ENVISAGE NO CHANGE IN POPPY BAN BUT A MAJOR INCREASE IN U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO FORMER POPPY GROWING AREAS.

C. AT SAME TIME I BELIEVE THAT GOT REMAINS DEFINITELY CONCERNED OVER USG REACTION TO A DECISION TO LIFT BAN, OR PARTIALLY TO LIFT BAN, WITHOUT USG ACQUIESCENCE. IT THEREFORE FEELS ITSELF TO BE ON HORNS OF SERIOUS DILEMMA -- ONE HORN BEING ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES

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